

# HOW DO I BECOME A REHS?

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS REGARDING REGISTRATION AS AN ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH SPECIALIST

1. **What duties does a Registered Environmental Health Specialist (REHS) perform?** A REHS works to improve the quality of life and health through environmental education, consultation, and protection. Although a majority of REHSs work for government, many are also employed by the private sector. Some typical program responsibilities include food protection, land use, recreational swimming areas, onsite septic systems, drinking water quality, housing, vector control, disaster sanitation, and solid, liquid, and hazardous materials management.

Typical duties of a REHS in local government include inspections of various facilities such as food establishments, public swimming pools, community drinking water systems, landfills, and underground storage tanks in order to determine compliance with federal, state, and local statutes, regulations, and ordinances. For further information contact California Environmental Health Association at [www.ceha.org](http://www.ceha.org), the California Conference of Directors of Environmental Health at [ccdeh.com](http://ccdeh.com), or the universities with approved environmental health degrees that are listed on our web page.

2. **What are the minimum requirements to become a REHS?** A bachelor's degree is required with a minimum of 30 semester units of approved basic science courses including approved coursework in biology, inorganic chemistry, organic chemistry or physics, microbiology, and college algebra (third year) or precalculus.
3. **What are basic science courses?** Basic science courses are normally the foundation college courses required for a degree in biology. These should not be confused with general education courses that cannot be counted as they are for non-science majors. A basic science course must be acceptable for degree in biological science. Courses designed for liberal arts, general education, or non-science degrees are not acceptable.
4. **Where can I get further information regarding the EHS Registration Program?** You may visit the Department of Health Services web page at [www.dhs.cahwnet.gov/ps/ddwem/environmental/REHS/REHS.htm](http://www.dhs.cahwnet.gov/ps/ddwem/environmental/REHS/REHS.htm) or contact Robin Belle Hook, Department of Health Services, Environmental Health Specialist Registration Program, PO Box 942732, MS 396, Sacramento, California 94234-7320 or telephone (916) 324-8819.
5. **Where can I get a listing of the basic requirements of the program?** On our web page, click on **Health and Safety Code** and look up

Section 106635. This will list the education, training, and experience requirements for the five different options.

6. **Which universities have approved environmental health degrees that meet the requirements of Option V (Section 106635)?**  
Universities offering approved programs for both the bachelor's and master's degrees are California State University, Northridge and California State University, Fresno. Universities offering an approved master's degree are the University of California, Los Angeles and Loma Linda University. California State University, San Bernardino offers an approved bachelor's degree. Please check with our office or your school counselor for the approved program option. For further information see our web page and select the **California State Colleges and Universities** icon.
7. **I graduated from a college in a country other than the United States. How can I receive credit for the coursework I have completed?** All candidates with **foreign transcripts** must have a commercial credential evaluation service review the official transcripts and submit a letter as a part of the application package. Click **Credentials Evaluation Services** on our web page for a list of companies that provide this service.
8. **How do I apply for registration as an Environmental Health Specialist?** You may call (916) 324-8819 and leave your name and address; remember to speak clearly and spell each word. An application form and other pertinent information will be mailed to you. Complete the application and return it with a nonrefundable fee of \$73.00. Arrange to have mailed your official transcripts, with degree posted where applicable, of all colleges attended to **Robin Belle Hook, Department of Health Services, EHS Registration Program, PO Box 942732, MS 396, Sacramento, California 94234-7320**. Alternatively you can download the application from the website, complete it, and submit the application package with the nonrefundable fee of \$73.00 as described above.
9. **How long does the evaluation process take?** An evaluation letter will be mailed to you approximately four weeks after the receipt of all required documentation. This letter tells you whether or not you are eligible to become an environmental health specialist trainee and may list additional requirements you need to complete.
10. **Where can I complete the training and experience requirements?**  
All local California environmental health agencies have a State approved Environmental Health Specialist Trainee Program. The typical way to satisfy the training and experience requirements is to work for a local environmental health agency. The specific training plan requirements can be found on the web page under **Health and Safety Code**, Section 106665. You may also want to talk to your local environmental health agency training officer.

11. **How do I prepare for the registration examination?** The prescribed training and experience requirements are designed to help you with the exam. A list of reference materials is available which lists sources that describe content areas. We have also prepared a study guide to help you. Both the reference list and the study guide are available from your local environmental health training officer, by mail from our office, or on our web page.

You also may want to consider taking one of the REHS Exam Preparation courses available through University of California Extension or through private consultants.

12. **When will I be eligible to take the examination to become a Registered Environmental Health Specialist?** After all of the education, training, and experience requirements have been met, you will be allowed to take the exam that is given three times a year. You will be notified prior to exam that you are eligible. The exam is scheduled in March, July, and November in both Sacramento and the Los Angeles area.
13. **When will I receive the results of the exam?** You will receive a notice in the mail approximately six weeks after the exam indicating whether you passed or failed. Percentage scores are **not** released.
14. **Must I report a change of address?** Yes, please send your written request for change of address to the **Department of Health Services** at the address listed below. Otherwise, we will not be able to contact you regarding the status of your application or your registration. It is your responsibility to notify us of any address change.
15. **What is the Environmental Health Specialist Registration Committee (EHSRC)?** The EHSRC was created in the statute [Health and Safety Code Section 106675] and its members are appointed by the governor to advise and make recommendations to the program. A list of the committee members is provided on the web page.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION YOU MAY CONTACT:**

**Robin Belle Hook**

**Department of Health Services**

**Environmental Health Specialist Registration Program**

**PO Box 942732, MS 396**

**Sacramento, California 94234-7320**

**Phone: (916) 324-8819**

**Email: [rhook1@dhs.ca.gov](mailto:rhook1@dhs.ca.gov)**

**Web Page: [www.dhs.cahwnet.gov/ps/ddwem/environmental/REHS/REHS.htm](http://www.dhs.cahwnet.gov/ps/ddwem/environmental/REHS/REHS.htm)**